

Backstage

A SPECIAL NEWSLETTER - FOR SUBSCRIBERS ONLY

Readers' Writes



Bronzed and ouzo drenched, Steve Jarratt has now returned from holiday in Greece and, despite our pleas, will be bringing his holiday snaps in soon.

Hello again to the new, improved Backstage - Amiga Format subscribers' own information superhighway. Sort of.

Obviously, my threats of wibbling inanely have spurred Backstage readers into action: this month I've received a handful of letters - thanks to everyone who wrote in.

However, this just isn't good enough! So as an added incentive, from now on there's a prize for the best Backstage letter to appear in these hallowed pages. Writer of the best missive will receive a selection of light reading kindly donated by Future Publishing's book division. All the books are about the Amiga, of course (such as Arexx: Your Amiga's Built-In Turbocharger or the Official Cannon Fodder Players' Guide) and cost a packet.

So I'm looking forward to being engulfed by a veritable avalanche of your mail. Er, on second thoughts...

Dear Backstage,

Amiga Format is an excellent mag which would be very hard to improve, but please, please bring back the *Imagine* tutorials. Now here's an idea for you. If readers, such as myself, were to write our own tutorials, either as one-offs or a series on particular packages, such as *Imagine*, would you firstly accept them, or even better, pay for them (gasp!) if they were of a

high enough standard? Also, are you interested in such things as *Imagine* models which the readers have created for inclusion on the Subscribers' Superdisk?

Other than that, keep up the excellent work. And please keep the complete packages on the Coverdisk - over the past year you have saved me lots of money because of this.

Gareth Llewellyn, Borth, Dyfed

The whole idea of Amiga Format - and, indeed, Backstage - is that it acts as a platform for reader interaction. If you've discovered easy ways of producing great results from an Amiga package, and not necessarily just Imagine, please send them in for other Amiga users to share.

We will accept unsolicited material, such as tutorials, but it's probably best to write in and let me know what sort of thing you're going to do before you do it! That way, we can make sure that you don't spend ages writing something that we can't use. I'd certainly be more than happy to print reader's work in Backstage. And if it's good enough, there'll be a cheque in the post.

Likewise, we'd be more than happy to include readers' Imagine models - as well as OctaMED tunes, PageSetter 2 pages, ProVector clip art or whatever - on the Superdisk.

Glad you like the Coverdisks: we've got a whole host of terrific packages included - including AMOS Pro and some other very exciting programs!

Dear Backstage,

You want to know what we subscribers think about Amiga Format: personally, I think you have the balance between serious and games about right; also the idea to give subscribers

WHAT I DO

Steve (Killy) McGill



Steve has problems dressing himself. It took several hours and three Fashion Police officers to disentangle him from the offending article.

When you're Scots and ridiculously tall (6'6") you begin to realise that the machination of the world revolves around timing and synchronicity. For example, if you place one leg in front of the other in a timed synchronised manner you can indulge in a bio-mechanical physiological phenomenon commonly known as walking.

Walking has several useful side effects - especially if you're tall. You can use it to travel to different locations. Calling upon my superior height, I can walk up to smaller people, look down on their heads and count the remarkable number of dandruff forming microbes. Amazing.

I walk to work from home every morning. I'm usually late due to a faulty Kickstart 3.0 chip. But that's no problem. I can also use my legs to 'walk' to Steve

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➤ Jarratt's desk to apologise and beg him for forgiveness. He's normally taken back by my politeness and forgives me every time (he's a sucker like that).

I also never cease to be amazed that the evolutionary process gifted me with such a useful utility as standard. I now walk to just about everywhere in Future's buildings. Apparently, version 3.915 of this utility is going to be available for Workbench 4.5 users. If rumours are true, it features true multi-tasking toe-ankle-knees-hips-waist-spine-shoulder-arms-neck-head and brain support.

The mind boggles at the staggering possibilities available to the adventurous user. Explore these possibilities with the world's biggest and best computer mag, *Amiga Format*.

➤ the extra disk is excellent. I do however think the standard of game demos on the Coverdisks has gone down. I suppose that's because I like shoot-em-ups and platformers!

If you've got an empty slot coming up in the mag, I would appreciate an article or even a tutorial on multimedia in general. Perhaps you could include some clipart or something that people can use in their creations.

One last thing: are you going to review *Lemmings 3* soon? I'm getting withdrawal symptoms since I completed *Lemmings 2* to gold standard! What about a demo of *Lemmings 3* on the Coverdisk?

Christine Kitt, Stapleton, Bristol

I think our game demos have been OK of late (not to everybody's tastes, I'll admit), but they're set to improve with things like Sensible Golf and (ta-daa!) Lemmings 3 in December. Steve Bradley also has a few surprises up his sleeves, so watch this space for the latest news!

SENSIBLE GAMES UP FOR GRABS

Another month, another compo. Last issue I promised you a copy of *Lightwave 3D* (the winner's name will be printed here next month), so this month it's time to give away some games. Virgin have kindly donated a copy of *Cannon Fodder* and *Apocalypse*, so if you fancy topping up your games library, merely answer the following question:

What was Sensible Software's first Amiga game?

Ooh, tricky one. No hints, no clues. Write your answer on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope (not forgetting to include your name and address) and send it to: Backstage Sensible Compo, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW.

The closing date is, oh, ages and ages away yet, and the winner's name will appear in the issue of *Backstage* after next.

FUTURE READING

Unless something has gone horribly wrong, this issue of *AF* should include an eight-page taster for Future's new mag, *Ultimate Future Games*. This upstart of a mag provides coverage of the next generation of games machines from CD32, 3DO and Jaguar to the Sony PlayStation, Sega Saturn, Nintendo Ultra 64 and beyond. Edited by games guru Frank O'Connor, *UFG* features hardware profiles, exclusive previews, competitions, reviews, and with the 132-page launch issue costing just 95p, you'd be mad to miss it.

By now the second issue of *Amiga CD32* magazine should be complete (and Editor Sue Grant will be convalescing in a rest home for knackered

journos). The mag boasts a cover CD loaded with demos including: *Wembley International Soccer*, *Banshee*, *Bubble 'n' Squeak*, *Top Gear 2*, *Arcade Pool*, *Superfrog*, *Cannon Fodder*, *Kid Chaos* and *Marvin's Marvellous Adventure*. *Amiga CD32* costs £4.95 but, as a special subscribers' offer you can get it for just £3.95! Give our mail order hotline a call on 0225 822511 and be ready to quote a credit card number (Access or Visa). A hot-off-the-press copy will be sent to you for a quid less than the normal cost. Bargain. *Amiga CD32* - brought to you by AF deputy editor Sue Grant.



Ultimate Future Games - it's fab. And the first issue only costs 95p

Multimedia, eh? I guess we could take a look at it, since some of the most impressive Amiga uses have been in multimedia applications. Be warned that true multimedia on the Amiga is expensive - of course, we'll show you how to achieve good results on a tight budget (a bit like Backstage, really).

GAMES NEWS

Manchester-based softies Ocean are keeping busy. *Shaq Fu* features American basketball star Shaquille O'Neal in a beat-em-up. Why? Well, not only is Shaq a fair old dunker, he's also well versed in the art of Kung Fu - though whether he wears a vest, stripey socks and fancy white boots remains to be seen. With eight different locations and characters aplenty, *Shaq Fu* should appeal to those of a pugnapcious disposition.

Remember *TEG*? Ocean are still working on it and (don't hold your breath) it should be out in November on A1200 and CD32. Five million square kilometres of contoured

landscapes are promised, and the whole shebang will be in glorious 3D.

General Kilbaba (of *Desert Strike* fame) has a son who was none too pleased when you tackled his dear old dad, so revenge is on his mind in Ocean's *Jungle Strike*. It's basically more of the same, just a tad harder. Can't wait to play it though.

Premier Manager 2 seems to have been in the top five for a hundred years and, knowing when they're on to a good thing, Gremlin are set to release *Premier Manager 3* in November. One new feature is a visual representation of matches where you get to see how each player moves about the park. Also, the transfer market now involves auction-style bidding.

The world of Disney is almost upon us with Virgin gearing up to release *Aladdin*, *The Lion King* and *The Jungle Book* in the next few months. Also on the go for CD32 is dinosaur spectacular *The Lost Eden*, an adventure with rendered 3D characters and scenery which should look amazing, as should Virgin's forthcoming flight sim *Overlord*.

And while we're on the subject of Virgin, a snippet of good news is that of all Virgin's product lines, guess which one is the most profitable. Super NES? Mega Drive? PC CD-ROM surely? Nope: the Amiga.

There's life in the old dog yet...

AF

Write to Backstage

If there's anything you would like to see in *Backstage* or *Amiga Format*, write to:

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Subscriber Superdisk

Issue 65 • November 1994

We take care of our subscribers. And, just to show you how much we care, here's Jason Holborn with another disk full of programs for your pleasure.

ON THIS MONTH'S DISK...

SPEL CHICKER: Need to spell check your documents? Want to solve anagrams and puzzles? Well, this program does the lot for you! For puzzle nuts everywhere, *Spel Chicker* is essential!

MINE HUNT: Clear the enemy minefields but don't get blown up trying in this brilliant conversion of the classic *Windows* game.

IMAGINE OBJECT: You don't need to spend £600 on *Lightwave* to get fantastic lens flare effects in your ray-traced artwork!

DEFTOOL 2: Change the default tool of any file in an instant without having to faff

around with complicated requesters. Using *Workbench* has never been easier!

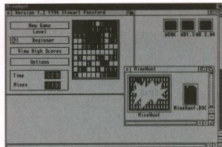
TURBO LAYERS: Enhance your *Workbench* windows with this brilliant utility that uses the Amiga's Blitter chip to shift those windows around in double quick time!

PING PONG: Relive the days of Nolan Bushnell's original *Pong* arcade game with this classic *Workbench* conversion. Play your Amiga or challenge a friend.

OCTAMED TUNE: Bop along to the toe-tapping sound of this month's *Octamed* tune. Listen to it and then remix your own version!

GETTING STARTED

You can access the programs and files on this month's *Subscribers' Superdisk* by inserting a copy of the *Workbench* disk into the internal drive of your Amiga and then switching on. Once *Workbench* has loaded, replace it with your *Subscribers' Superdisk* and a disk icon appears labelled *SUBDISK*. Before you attempt to use any of the programs on the *Superdisk*, make a back-up of the disk using the procedure detailed in the *Coverdisk* pages in this month's issue of *Amiga Format*. Once you've made a back-up, store the original in a safe place and run all the programs from your copy.



Use your powers of logic (plus a bit of good luck) to find every safe square in the *Mine Hunt* minefield.

which tells you how many mines are immediately next to that square in all eight directions. Using your powers of logic, you have to then work out where the next free space is. Good luck!

IMAGINE OBJECT

Graphic artists are a funny lot. Just like the pop musicians, graphic artists like to use effects that are considered trendy and 'in'. One such effect that has certainly been suffering from over exposure is the infamous lens flare that has cropped up in just about every ray-traced image since NewTek introduced the effect in its ray-tracing

Continued overleaf →

SPEL CHICKER

Although most commercial word processors come equipped with comprehensive spell checking facilities, it's rare to find a text editor or a PD word processor with this all-important feature. *Amiga Format* reader Dave Schofield obviously felt that there was a need for a dedicated spell checking program and *Spel Chicker* (the deliberate misspelling is obviously a little joke!) is the result.

Written in *AMOS Professional*, *Spel Chicker* can check the spelling of words within any ASCII or Scribble! document by comparing the spellings with those in its dictionary file. But *Spel Chicker* does a lot more than just spell checking documents. If you're a fan of puzzles such as crosswords and anagrams then *Spel Chicker* will be of interest to you too. Built into *Spel Chicker* are tools designed specifically to help you crack even the most difficult anagrams and crossword puzzles. All you need to do is feed *Spel Chicker* the anagram or the letters you already have for a crossword clue and it will then provide you with a list of possible solutions.

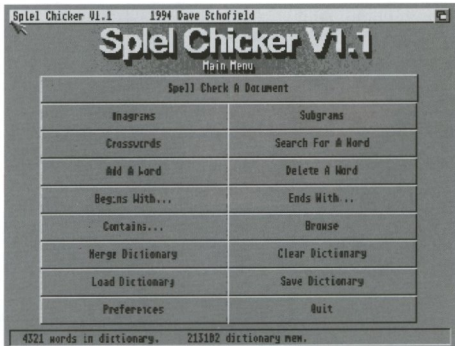
The version of *Spel Chicker* on this month's *Subscribers' Superdisk* is *Shareware* and therefore it only has a small (4,000 word) dictionary. If you register the program (it costs £5), the author will send you the latest version complete with a 25,000 word dictionary!

MINE HUNT

If you've ever used a PC then chances are you've already experienced the delights of *MicroSoft Windows*, the PC's attempt at a *Workbench*-like WIMP system. Although *Windows* looks very pretty, it's hugely demanding on hard disk and memory space, not to mention the fact that you need at least a 386 PC equipped with a graphics accelerator

card in order for *Windows* to run at a half decent rate. One thing that *Windows* does have in its favour, however, is a gem of a game called *Minefield*.

Over the past few months we've been inundated with requests for an Amiga version of this classic game and, after many weeks of searching, we've finally found what we think is the best version available. The theory behind *Mine Hunt* is simple enough – you have to successfully find every single safe square in a minefield without detonating a single mine. Each square you click on reveals a number



Solve anagrams and crossword puzzles with this month's *Subscribers' Superdisk* star program, *Spel Chicker*.

CG FONTS

McGill Sans ERASER DUST

Add class to your DTP and word processing documents with these two delightful outline fonts.

All right, I know these two fonts can't be used with the PageSetter 2 Coverdisk from AF63 but they are still a couple of extremely versatile CompuGraphic outline fonts.

To install the fonts, boot from your normal Workbench system disks and follow the following instructions:

- 1 Run the Fountain (or Intellifont if you have an A1200 or an A4000) program in your System directory and insert the Subscribers' Superdisk in any drive.
- 2 Click on the gadget at the top right of the screen under Outline Font Source and

select SUBDISK from the list of volumes. Click on CGFonts drawer and click on OK. The two fonts on the Superdisk should then be shown in the Source Typefaces list.

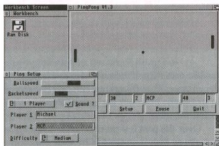
3 Click once on both fonts (a '*' symbol appears next to them) and then click on Install Marked Typefaces. After a bit of disk swapping, the two fonts are installed on to your Workbench disk. You may find that there is not enough free space on your Workbench and so some of your files may have to be removed. Important: don't forget to always work on a back-up of your Workbench disk.

program, Lightwave. Although Impulse have since added Lens Flares to their *Imagine 3* ray-tracing program, it's not featured on *Imagine 2* (the version on the AF53 Coverdisk). But on this month's Subscribers' Superdisk you'll find a 3D object that creates a lens flare in *Imagine 2* whenever the object is placed immediately behind a light source that is within view.

The light from the light source illuminates the object and creates a very impressive looking lens flare that even *Lightwave* users would be proud of.

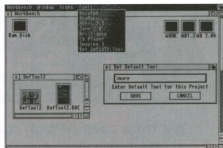
PING PONG

Ping Pong may not have the sort of state-of-the-art graphics that you'd expect from an Amiga game but it does have one all-important



Relive the days of blocky black and white graphics with this conversion of the arcade classic, *Pong*.

ingredient in abundance – playability. Veteran Amiga users should recognise this classic arcade game immediately – it's based on Nolan Bushnell's early Eighties game *Pong*,



Change a data file default tool faster than you can say: 'I hate the complicated information requester'.

the first successful coin operated game to be made publicly available.

The gameplay is simple enough – use the left Shift and Alt keys to move a little on-screen bat which you must use to hit a ball back at your opponent. *Ping Pong* gives you extensive control over the speed of both the bats and the ball so there's plenty to keep beginners and seasoned *Pong* masters happy.

DEFTOOL 2

The *Tool Alias* program is great for temporarily controlling the default tool of any data file but it won't permanently alter a file's default tool so that a paint program, word processor (or whatever) is loaded instead of the author's chosen program. With *DefTool 2* installed on your system, the process of altering a data file's default tool is made considerably easier and certainly a lot faster.

Simply run the *DefTool 2* program and an extra menu item called Set Default Tool should appear in the Tools pull-down menu on your Workbench. To use it, click on a project icon, select this menu item and a requester pops up on to the screen containing the file's current default tool. Click inside the string gadget, change it to suit your needs and then save it to disk and you're done. It really is that simple!

TURBO LAYERS

Turbo Layers is one of those utilities that doesn't actually sound particularly useful when you explain what it does. But once it's installed on your Amiga, you'll wonder how you ever coped without it!

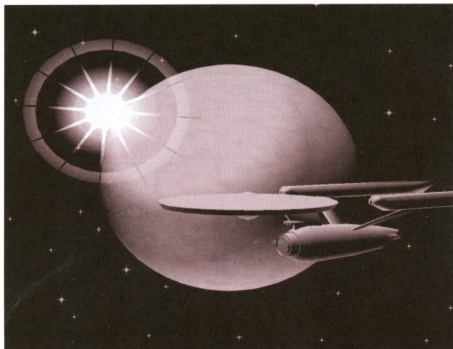
What *Turbo Layers* does is to redirect the dragging of Workbench windows to the Amiga's Blitter chip so that instead of simply seeing a boring outline whenever you drag a window around the Workbench, you'll be able to see the contents of the window as well! Go on, give it a try – I challenge you not to find this utility useful!

OCTAMED TUNE

You should all have a copy of the excellent *OctaMED 5.0* program we featured on the AF62 Coverdisk? Well stop reading this and get this brilliant *OctaMED* tune loaded up and playing! Go on, what are you waiting for?!

If you have any suggestions, comments or programs that you would like to see on the Subscribers' Superdisk, please write to:

Jason Holborn,
Amiga Format Subscribers' Superdisk,
Future Publishing,
30 Monmouth Street,
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You don't need to spend hundreds of pounds on *Lightwave* to create fantastic looking lens flare effects!